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Ferenc Kazinczy's *Tübingai pályamű*
and its literary, political antecedents

THESES OF PHD DISSERTATION

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The intention of Dissertation

Joseph II the Austrian emperor and king of Hungary declared the German to be the official language of Hungary instead of the accustomed Latin, so the German became the language of the legislature, the jurisdiction and the administration. These arrangements provoked a serious resistance in Hungary, mainly in the counties where the Hungarian speaking population was in majority. The language issue was turning into a political question from that time, and this had to be dealt with at different levels of society. And we can observe a hard period, which lasted for approximately a half century, finishing in 1844, when the Hungarian became the official language of the country even though the nationalities protested against it. These five decades were about the slow spread of the Hungarian language, which was due to contemporary politicians, but also to scientists and writers.

Several of the Diets after 1790 had the language issue as a topic, but the delegates typically brought this problem out only when the urgent questions had been negotiated, and the delegates were waiting for the king's answer. One of these Diets is the one in 1807 where although no law was made about the Hungarian language, the question got into the order of the day not long before the end of the Diet. This Diet attracted my attention because although the question of making the Hungarian to be the official language of Hungary has already been widely discussed (Gyula Szekfű even published the most important documents related to this topic in a particular volume), this Diet was overshadowed by the previous Diet of 1805, mainly because no acts were made concerning the language. Despite the parliamentary failure it was an important time, because many publications about the language issue appeared. The question of the national language was raised by more and more people, and this fits well into the Western European processes however a bit late. Parallel to the political argument there was an academic dispute about the state of development, richness and refinement of the Hungarian language, in other words, whether the Hungarian was to be capable of suiting the requirements of a high-level science and administration. To encourage more intensive scientific discussion many competitions were announced, amongst them two set the Hungarian as the object of research. The first announcement was made by István Kultsár in 1804. He expected an overall picture about the situation, development and precession of the language from the competitors. The rewarded essays were published in 1806. The other competition was linked to Cotta's, a Tübingen bookseller, who announced it on behalf of the Court of Vienna, and its real target was to collect the argues against the approbation of

Hungarian as the official language. Twenty-two works were sent to Kultsár's competition, and though the whole list of the essays is not known, six works (László Teleki's, János Kis's, Pál Pántzél's, Antal Pucz's, József Mátyási's and Imre Péchy's) were published later. To the Cotta's application twenty-one works came in, but unfortunately all the works and the critiques were destroyed in a fire, and the only sure thing is that Ferenc Kazinczy had composed his essay to this competition. The list of the competitors, due to Gusztáv Heinrich, is available, and the finding of other essays might need further researches. In those years independently from the competitions ten more pamphlets discussing the language issue were published. Their writers were András Cházár (2 works), István Sándor, László Perecsényi Nagy, József Kis, József Gregor, Ferenc Czinke, Alajos Joakim Szekér, András Farkas Berei and György Fejér. Beside these printed works some manuscripts also are disposable in which we find rhyming pasquilles and some works which reflect on the language issue. So the sources of my searching were the competition essays published between 1806 and 1809, pamphlets about the language issue, the 1916's single edition of Kazinczy's essay and documents, manuscripts related to 1807's Diets. The latter is a largish and heterogeneous material, and in addition to this it differs largely from the more sophisticated printed writings in form and in content, and it would have expanded the frames of this dissertation, therefore I give them in appendix with a short introduction. I publish the pamphlets and printed essays in chronological order, and this is what mainly defines the structure of my dissertation. According to this my dissertation starts with a short introduction, and then continues with the review of the language issue, the official language use, and the European problem of development of language. The following second chapter focuses on the Diet of 1807, its antecedents and its participants. Its goal to present what political interests and intentions influenced the decisions of the Diet and how the problem of the Hungarian language appeared in the politics. The presentation and the study of this is also important, because the events of the Diet were closely related the later announcement of the Tübingen competition. In the third chapter those pamphlets concerning the Hungarian language are presented which appeared between 1806 and 1809, so their timing strongly suggests that we should not overlook the ideas represented in them. In the fourth and the fifth chapter the previously mentioned two competition essays are discussed. In the fourth the works made for the competition by István Kultsár are enumerated, in the fifth Ferenc Kazinczy's 'Tübingai pályamű.'

The work which is emphasised in the title of my PhD dissertation is one of the most accurate one of this period. This work, titled 'Tübingai pályamű,' finished in 1808, is the only work of the great litterateur which was made for an official competition. This one unfolds his

linguistic, literary viewpoint about the Hungarian language for a wider audience for the first time. This competition essay and the whole competition had a rather hard history, as due to several more important issues of politics no announcement of results was ever made, the competitors did not receive any notification about their works. Kazinczy, who believed this one to be an important work of his, was trying to have his competition essay published for years, but he did not managed to, and only some extracts were published in periodicals. Eventually the text was published only at the beginning of the 20th century. Only the German version of the work is full, the Hungarian is fragmentary.

The announcement of the competition was suggested by the Vienna Court inspired by the fierce arguments of the 1807's Diet. The Court believed it to be useful to asses the attitudes and get arguments against the Hungarian. The politics and the literature are joined closely again, so it seemed to be advisable not to observe the works from only one viewpoint. This results that the interpretation of Kazinczy's work must include the contemporary political events, mainly the Diets, and the printed pamphlets.

The methodology of the dissertation includes the collecting and the researching of the documents of the period beside Kazinczy's essay. Not only the study of the manuscripts causes problems, but the examination of the printed pamphlets as there is no thematic help which might help orientation. After all I used the time index of printing workshops. Having studied the different printing workshops of Hungarian cities and their issuing of works, I choose those ones which were related to the language issue.

The pamphlets and the Diet's argument about the language take us closer to the more complex interpretation of Kazinczy's work. On the other hand it is obvious that the studied material is extremely rich and colourful, despite its homogeneity. Some of the works are complex enough to be the subject of a PhD dissertation on their own. I refer to the works of László Teleki and Antal Putz in the first place. That is why I did not try to analyze these writings in full detail, but I emphasised on the exposing the most important thoughts of all the 16 writings presented and making clear the train thought of essays and their relations to the most widespread ideas of that time. As a result of this comprehensive, analytical presentation it becomes obvious that Kazinczy's originality is rooted in his conceptualization which is different of the others on important points.

Because of its theme my dissertation lies on the border of different areas of science. As the most important scene of the solving the language issue was the Diet, and the struggle for the Hungarian language was a part of the political fight against the court, at this point my dissertation is connected to history. On the other hand there was also a heated debate in the

scientific and literary life of the age. This makes the study of the language issue be a question of literary history. This matter can also be studied from a linguistic point of view within the theoretical linguistics and history of language, as the development of linguistics started at this period. Many asked the question together with Jenisch what the perfect language was, what the language should be to be expressive and rich. Finally the problem is related to the contemporary education, the effect of Western or Eastern (Russian) examples, the overshadowing of the Latin as a scientific language. So this makes the issue of the Hungarian in the 19th century be a question of cultural history as well as the question of history, literature and linguistics. In my dissertation the historical and literary viewpoints are the main ones, but I intended to use the results offered by the linguistic researches, and I tried to draw attention to the cultural history references.

The results of the dissertation

Ferenc Kazinczy's 'Tübingai pályamű' is an undeservingly forgotten piece of the oeuvre. In my dissertation I made an attempt to reveal antecedents of the competition essay in the field of theory, thought history, and philology, researching the previous pamphlets of the age. As the result of this it is obvious that Kazinczy differs from his contemporaries in his basic approach. His approach focuses on literature. The contemporaries were mainly dealing with Hungarian as a scientific language, namely whether it was suitable for the aims of science, the education, and whether it had the sufficient grammatical and lexical development for this, but more than the half of Kazinczy's work is a literary historical overview. This is basically a rich anthology which is used by Kazinczy to demonstrate the development of the language with the development of the literature. Of course he treated grammar too, he was very interested in dialectical expressions, but he focused on literature. He did not even comment on it, the collected texts spoke for themselves.

Having varied standards, the other pamphlets deal with the popular issues of the time. Some of them are really high level, scientific writings, however if they raise the matter of literature they do it only as an accessory thing to present the variety of the lexis which might be used by a scientific society. No one put the literature in such a central place as Kazinczy did. Maybe this difference in the viewpoints also contributed to the arguments he had with his contemporaries, however he never articulated this.

From the philological point of view the manuscript emerged from the Papszász heritage has a great importance which is an early version of the for Kazinczy's essay.

Although this is also fragmentary, but its importance is further emphasized by the fact that it helps to complete the missing parts of the Hungarian version published by Gusztáv Heinrich. It has parts which were unknown in Hungarian until this time. (I have mentioned earlier that the full text of the essay is in German.)

All these writings – pamphlets and competition essays – influenced Kazinczy, who was searching for new works continuously, he was interested in everything. Due to his expensive correspondence he was able to get many of them. And everything which he has read about the issue of language might have an effect on the development of his latter views. These could have an inspiring effect for him to articulate his own conception which the ‘Tübingai pályamű’ is a prominent piece of.

The material presented in the Appendix is a demonstration of the colourful mentality of the era. These are very diversified works which are partly prose and partly lyrical. The writings dealing with the language issue are so important because they reveal the ideas and emotions of the age. One can learn the considerations which were the concerns of a given era, what the people wanted to gain, what inspired or exasperated them. For the manuscripts an also essential point of view is that they were not seen by the censorship, so their authors dared to express their views more frankly. Many interesting writings may emerge from the depths of archives which are from this period; the research may introduce a lot of news.